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ABSTRACT

Multicultural counseling competencies have become an increasingly important component of counselor training. This article presents rationale for infusing multicultural competencies into select CACREP course areas, which are assessment, helping relationships, professional identity, and career development. Concrete activities that encompass proposed counselor training program goals, instructional strategies, and guidelines and objectives recommended in past research are presented for these curricular areas. This article also examines future directions for multicultural competency research. (Contains 41 references.) (Author/JDM)

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Abstract

Multicultural counseling competencies have become an increasingly important component of counselor training. This article presents rationale for infusing multicultural competencies into select CACREP course areas, which are assessment, helping relationships, professional identity, and career development. Concrete activities that encompass proposed counselor training program goals, instructional strategies, and guidelines and objectives recommended in past research are presented for these curricular areas. This article also examines future directions for multicultural competency research.

Infusing Multicultural Counseling Competencies into Counselor Training Curriculum

Researchers and educators have attempted to increase counselors' awareness and knowledge of multicultural issues in the larger community as well as in the helping relationship (Toporek & Reza, 2001). The United States population is becoming increasingly diverse, leading to an increased focus in counselor education, research and practice on multicultural issues and multicultural competency training. Traditional counseling approaches are not adequate for working with clients of different cultural backgrounds because they tend to focus on the value system of the dominant culture. Additionally, the counseling session is typically a meeting of two different and often opposing worldviews, and there are ethical implications for addressing and fully understanding these worldviews for a more effective and therapeutic relationship (Arredondo, 1999; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992).

Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) proposed multicultural competency standards and objectives to introduce counselors to the three dimensions of multicultural competency to better serve minority clients. The three dimensions are counselor beliefs and attitudes regarding other cultures, knowledge of various forms of oppressions and its impact on the counseling relationship, and skills in three domains. These domains involve (a) counselor self-awareness, which is described as the building block for further multicultural development; (b) knowledge of other cultural norms and value systems, and understanding of the client's worldview; and (c) skill in providing culturally appropriate assessments and interventions (Arredondo, 1999).

Copeland (1982) proposed four models for counselor training programs that introduce ways to integrate multicultural competencies into training programs. The integration model is the most ideal of all four models because it holds the entire counselor training program accountable

for multicultural training and consistently exposes the students to multicultural issues in different counseling domains (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994). Hartung (1996) states that most counselor training programs are moving toward the integration model due to increased focus on multicultural issues in research and practice.

Given the general movement towards an infusion approach, it is imperative to explore ways to integrate the proposed multicultural competencies throughout traditional counseling curriculum so that counselor trainees do not disservice future clients. The purpose of this paper is to present strategies and innovative activities to infuse multicultural counseling competencies into select CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) coursework.

Counselor Training Program Goals and Instructional Strategies

Researchers (Garcia, Wright, & Corey, 1991; Sue, Carter, Casa, Fouad, Ivey, Jensen, LaFromboise, Manese, Ponterotto, & Vasquez-Nutall, 1998) have proposed training goals aimed at infusing multicultural competencies in various areas of the counselor training program. Proposed goals address concerns related to curriculum design, program and faculty evaluation, diversity promotion, and multicultural competence levels of counselor trainees and trainers. Goals should be outlined in each course and systematically evaluated (Constantine, Ladany, Inman, & Ponterotto, 1996; Ponterotto, Alexander, & Greiger, 1995; Swanson, 1993).

There are also several instructional strategies presented in the multicultural literature that are useful for the infusion approach (Garcia et al., 1991; LaFromboise & Foster, 1994; Ponterotto & Benesch, 1988; Ridley et al., 1994; Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). They can be combined to cater to various learning styles of counselor trainees. They include (a) didactic methods; (b) experiential exercises; (c) supervised practicum/internship, where diverse clientele

and the multicultural training of supervisors are emphasized; (d) reading assignments; (e) writing assignments; (f) participatory learning, such as role-playing; (g) modeling/observational learning; (h) technology-assisted training, including distance learning; (i) introspection; and (j) research on multicultural training issues.

Infusion of Multicultural Counseling Competencies in Select Core Curriculum

Researchers (Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez, & Stadler, 1996; Betz, 1993; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1995; Das, 1995; DeLucia-Waack, 1996; LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995; Pedersen, 1997; Savickas & Walsh, 1996; Sue et al., 1996; Suzuki, Ponterotto, & Meller, 2001; Triandis, 1993) have suggested some general guidelines and objectives for infusing multicultural counseling competencies into various CACREP (www.counseling org/CACREP/2001standards) courses. The CACREP coursework areas that are addressed in this article include (a) Assessment/Appraisal; (b) Theories/Helping Relationships; (c) Ethics/Professional Identity; and (d) Career Development. The focus is on assessing how these guidelines can be applied concretely in each course area. The list of activities provided in this paper is not exhaustive and only addresses a few of the training goals. The presented activities can be translated across course areas and can be expanded to address other training goals and strategies. The goal is to begin infusing multicultural competency in a concrete manner in counselor education curriculum so that counselor trainees are better equipped to work with a diverse clientele.

Assessment/Appraisal

A primary guideline concerning this course area is that the limitations of traditional approaches to assessment should be discussed in counselor training to avoid test misuse. These limitations include a lack of attention to cultural variables, lack of knowledge of test

construction, an emphasis on universal standards of testing, and how the language of a test may distort test results for the minority client (Arredondo et al., 1996; DeLucia-Waack, 1996; LaFramboise & Foster, 1992).

Another guideline involves discussing the multicultural implications of test administration and interpretation. This includes being able to appropriately score and interpret a test, understanding the difficulties in translating a test, assessing how dominant values affect administration and interpretation, and having a knowledge of culture-specific symptoms to prevent misinterpretation and misdiagnosis (Arredondo et al., 1996; Triandis, 1993). Counselor trainers should also emphasize a broader model of assessment, and should be aware of key variables in the assessment process. These variables include acculturation level, native language, ethnic identity, gender/sexual orientation issues, perceptions of the testing process, and sociopolitical variables (DeLucia-Waack, 1996).

Recognizing biases in the DSM IV (APA, 1994) is an important objective in multicultural competency training. Trainees should be instructed to correctly use the manual with minority clients and consider multicultural implications while consulting with other counselors when formulating a diagnosis (DeLucia-Waack, 1996).

Some suggested activities in multicultural research include case scenarios (Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001), the use of test scores (Byington, Fischer, Walker, & Freedman, 1997), an interpretation skills activity (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991), and didactic methods (Sabnani et al., 1991).

Case scenarios.

Give a case scenario of the presenting problem of a client and include a brief description of the client's background. Have the trainee explore the client's ethnic group's beliefs and

values. What assessment tool(s) would be appropriate? What are the benefits and limitations of each tool? What are the multicultural implications of each tool? What is the normative group for each instrument? What are some considerations for administration and interpretation? (This activity uses reading and writing assignment strategies, and is useful in assisting counselor trainees to acquire knowledge about culturally appropriate assessment tools.)

Use of test scores.

Give scores for various tests. Provide information regarding the client's background. What are some recommendations for future steps? What is a possible diagnosis based upon the test scores? What influenced the diagnosis? (This activity can be useful for exploring biases in the DSM IV; it can be used to address the skills dimension of the multicultural counseling competencies.)

Interpretation skills activity.

This is a role-play activity that involves the use of a trainee as the multicultural client, and another trainee as the counselor. Scores are given for a particular inventory, and test interpretation is simulated in a class setting. The instructor can help the trainees explore what cultural variables should be considered during the interpretation process. The rest of the class could be used for suggestions and constructive feedback. (This activity utilizes the participatory and modeling/observational learning instructional strategies; it is a good outlet for students to practice culturally appropriate skills in a safe environment.)

Didactic methods.

Give a different assessment tool to each dyad in this course. Have them discuss the normative group that the tool is based on, what the assessment tool measures, and any multicultural limitations it may have. Allow the trainees to discuss their findings with the class.

This allows the class to be exposed to many instruments. (This activity uses the didactic method and allows trainees to gain knowledge about culturally appropriate interventions.)

Theories/Helping Relationships

It is important to advise trainees to view each theory from a broad perspective, and to consider the role of culture and worldview of each theory. It is also necessary to address the shortcomings of traditional counseling theories. Because traditional theories are based on the core values of Euro-Americans, those that utilize these theories are consequently imposing the dominant culture's values onto the client, which may conflict with the client's values. Each theory is created from a particular worldview; these worldviews determine how one thinks and behaves. Worldviews may clash in a session, leading to communication difficulties (Arredondo et al., 1996; Das, 1995; DeLucia-Waack, 1996; Sue et al., 1996).

Another objective related to this course area is to identify the cultural values and assumptions of a particular theory versus those of different cultural groups (Arredondo et al., 1996; Das, 1995; Sue et al., 1996). It is important to consider how traditional theories can be problematic for certain clients, and what therapies may be more helpful overall for certain cultural groups. It is invaluable to educate trainees on the origin of various counseling techniques and strategies, and the implications for a particular group. Counselor educators can help trainees modify techniques or interventions to meet the needs of various clients. They can also introduce the students to non-traditional interventions and strategies such as the use of artwork and poetry and stories when counseling Native Americans, or the use of journaling when working with Asian American clients. Trainees should be instructed when verbal and nonverbal helping responses are appropriate with minority clients. Educators can also assist trainees in gathering

information regarding community helping resources for clients who may have different views regarding counseling and mental health in general.

Some suggested activities for infusing multicultural counseling competencies for this course area include developing a personal counseling theory (Ridley et al., 1994), presenting on a special population (Ancis & Sanchez-Hucles, 2000), using portfolios (Coleman, 1996), bringing in guest speakers to the classroom (Sabnani et al., 1991), and researching the cultural background of a theorist.

Develop a personal theory.

Organize a coherent, consistent personal theory that reflects the trainee's perspective. This is can be a cultural autobiography that explains the trainee's basic assumptions about mental health and counseling. A trainee can examine what his or her social and historical influences are in creating a theoretical orientation. It can be useful to have the trainees compare their assumptions to those found in other theories. This is an invaluable exercise in helping the student formulate their theoretical orientation. (This activity can be presented as a writing assignment that helps the counselor trainee develop self-awareness as well as knowledge concerning existing theories.)

Special population presentation.

Report on the norms, values, shared history, and the common barriers to counseling use within a particular cultural group. Discuss how differences in acculturation level as well as within-group diversity may affect the acceptance of counseling as a venue for these clients. List appropriate counseling theories and techniques, and suggest ways other theories or interventions could be altered to be useful for a particular population. (This activity is a didactic method that addresses the knowledge and skill dimensions of the competencies).

Portfolios.

Use a portfolio to track knowledge of theories and multicultural issues. (This activity is a writing exercise and an introspection strategy that can measure the skill and knowledge dimensions. It can be an outlet for counselor educators to provide constructive feedback to trainees.)

Guest speakers.

Use guest speakers that represent different theoretical orientations to speak about multicultural issues and appropriate techniques. (This activity is an observational learning strategy that increase the trainee's knowledge of various groups and culturally appropriate interventions.)

Cultural background of a theorist.

Study the background of a major theorist, and determine how the theorist's background influenced the perspective of his or her theory. (This activity is a writing exercise that can help trainees identify how core values of a cultural group can impact the formation of a theory.)

Ethics/Professional Identity

Some objectives proposed in the literature for infusing multicultural counseling competencies in this course area involve ethical codes and general ethical decision-making processes. An important objective in helping counselor trainees become more multiculturally sensitive is to understand that current codes of ethics need to be interpreted in the context of the client's culture. Students should be encouraged to analyze the codes for cultural appropriateness and cultural bias and discouraged from relying solely on them for decision-making (DeLucia-Waack, 1996; Pedersen, 1997).

Another important objective is to help trainees understand potential ethical violations regarding multicultural counseling. These violations may include, but are not limited to, viewing a client from the counselor's cultural perspective, stereotyping clients based upon their cultural group, selecting inappropriate counseling techniques, and selecting inappropriate tests and measures (Pedersen, 1997).

Some activities to apply the above guidelines and objectives and to address the proposed multicultural counseling competencies (Sue et al., 1992) include using case scenarios, dissecting ethics codes (DeLucia-Waack, 1996; Pedersen, 1997; Ridley et al., 1994), and using role-playing exercises (Sabnani et al., 1991; Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001).

Case scenarios.

Review ethical violations through case scenarios in various cultural contexts. Use vignettes to open discussions regarding multicultural issues such as dual relationships, bartering, confidentiality, and cultural conflicts within the codes. Encourage reading about other cultures by providing a reading list to aid in understanding a group's core values. (This activity utilizes the instructional strategies of didactic methods and reading assignments. It addresses the knowledge domain of the competencies.)

Dissect ethics codes.

Discuss what "competence" means in the codes. Because it is not defined, this could be used as a writing exercise where the trainee could research multicultural competency and specify how it could be demonstrated in the counseling session. In the writing assignment, self-awareness could be incorporated so that the trainee can understand how knowing oneself avoids imposing values on the client. (This activity involves the writing assignment strategy and

addresses the self-awareness domain and the knowledge dimension of the multicultural counseling competencies.)

Role-playing exercise.

A role-play could be used to incorporate ethical issues into training. One student could serve as the client presenting a difficult ethical issue; the instructor or another student could play the counselor, and the rest of the class could sort out the issues using the decision-making steps. This would help trainees learn the steps and complexities of ethical decision-making while incorporating multicultural concerns. (This activity would involve the participatory and modeling/observational learning strategies that would involve peer learning as well. It addresses the skills and knowledge dimensions of the proposed competencies.)

Career Development

Guidelines and objectives suggested in this course area involve emphasizing an elaborate and collaborative view of assessment and career counseling as a practice. Counselor educators should emphasize a broader view of assessment and challenge students to think about how cultural variables affect vocational decision-making as well as its relevance to perceived career opportunities and barriers. Another related objective would be to increase trainees' knowledge of the labor market to understand educational and training requirements and the job outlook for a particular field to assist a client choose a career path in an informed manner (Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995; Savickas & Walsh, 1996; Suzuki et al., 2001).

Another guideline is to have students explore the main criticisms of vocational assessment, and question the utility of various inventories and theories with minority clients (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1995; Triandis, 1993). Test bias affects interpretation, so it is essential for trainees to understand the limitations that testing may have for minority clients. Also some

inventories, such as interest inventories or work values measures, may mean different things in the career counseling process for minority clients and my conflict with the dominant culture's value system (Betz, 1993). To avoid imposing one's values on a client during the career decision-making process while addressing his or her perceptions of career opportunities, it is important to emphasize to counselor trainees the significance of the collaborative nature of career counseling. Assessment goals should be discussed with the client to help him or her increase a sense of autonomy and to better understand his or her beliefs and attitudes (Savickas & Walsh, 1996; Suzuki et al., 2001).

Some suggested activities for addressing multicultural issues in the career course area include developing a career counseling model (Ponterotto, Rivera & Sueyoshi, 2000; Savickas & Walsh, 1996), interviewing a career counselor, presenting or writing a paper on a special population, using MCT theory to enhance career counseling, and using case studies (Zunker, 1998).

Career counseling model.

Develop a career counseling model that would connect theory to practice while considering multicultural issues. Some questions that could be asked in the assignment include (a) what should be considered in the intake and why; (b) how could variables such as value system, identity development stage, acculturation level, language, educational aspiration, locus of control, thoughts regarding barriers and oppression, religion, family and larger community, and career self-efficacy be included in career decision-making processing; and (c) how could career theories be integrated into practice and what are the multicultural implications of those theories. (This activity could be a writing assignment or a participatory learning exercise that can address the skills domain of the multicultural counseling competencies.)

Interview a career counselor.

Interview a career counselor in the community about disability issues. Or visit a job site and learn about particular job functions and common problems faced by those with disabilities. In this paper students can write about their assumptions about persons with disabilities regarding job search or career self-efficacy; they can also brainstorm on ways to serve as an advocate for those with disabilities. (This activity is a writing assignment and introspection strategy that addresses the knowledge dimension.)

Presentation and/or paper on a special population.

Trainees can address the following questions in this assignment: (a) what are the considerations for a career counselor regarding a special population; (b) what are the benefits and limitations of traditional theories and assessment tools for this population; and (c) what are some current issues this population is dealing with related to career exploration and development. (This can be writing assignment or didactic exercise that examines the knowledge domain of the competencies.)

Utilizing multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT) theory.

Pick a proposition and/or corollary from MCT theory. Provide a referenced position for its support in career counseling. (This is a writing assignment that can look at all dimensions of the proposed multicultural counseling competencies.)

Use of case studies.

This exercise generates theoretical issues and demonstrates how to alter or combine existing career theories to best benefit the client. (This activity can address several instructional strategies including didactic methods, experiential exercises, writing assignments, and

participatory or observational learning. It can be used to promote any of the three dimensions-awareness, knowledge, and/or skills.)

Research Directions

Recent research reports that multicultural competency will significantly increase after training (Manese, Wu, & Nepomuceno, 2001; Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1997) and self-awareness is the building block for increasing multicultural competence (Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1997; Richardson & Molinaro, 1996; Sabnani et al., 1991). Additionally, cross-cultural contact ((Diaz-Lazaro & Cohen, 2001), mentorship projects (Salzman, 2000), multicultural/experiential activities (Arredondo et al., 1996; Carlson, Brack, Laygo, Cohen, & Kirkscey, 1998; Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1997) and the use of portfolios has been shown to increase multicultural competency levels of counselor trainees.

Future research directions for addressing the variables related to multicultural competency training have been proposed, and offer some insight to the multifaceted nature of multicultural issues in counseling. Some areas where future research is needed in training programs involve: (a) determining the effectiveness of various training methods through qualitative and evaluative measures; (b) establishing ways that multicultural competencies can be integrated into the coursework of counselor training programs (Carlson et al., 1998; Constantine et al., 1996; Fuertes, Bartolomeo, & Nichols, 2001); (c) examining how counselor self-awareness, especially concerning racial identity development is related to beliefs, attitudes and actual behavior (Richardson & Molinaro, 1996; Sabnani et al., 1991); and (d) creating and revising multicultural competency and general counseling assessment tools to better serve minority clients (Ponterotto, 1998), as well as examining how ethnicity and other cultural variables affect assessment scores (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1995; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995).

Some general research suggestions in the literature are to (a) look at cultural variables not just as demographics, but also as an independent variable in research designs; (b) evaluate the utility of traditional research designs and clinical interviews with minority clients; (c) increase the use of qualitative methods (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Richardson & Molinaro, 1996); (d) pay attention to within-group differences (Betz, 1993; Ponterotto, 1998); (e) not rely too heavily on traditional psychometric instrumentation (Ponterotto, 1998); and (f) use various populations in research design to ensure generalizability of the findings. Because most multicultural research is commonly found in special issue journals (Ivey & Ivey, 1997), there is a growing need to integrate multicultural issues and topics throughout a range of journals and counseling areas.

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